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# HIGHLAND LIGHT



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THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.  
TORONTO

# HIGHLAND LIGHT

## AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
HENRY ADAMS BELLOWS

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1921

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, February, 1921

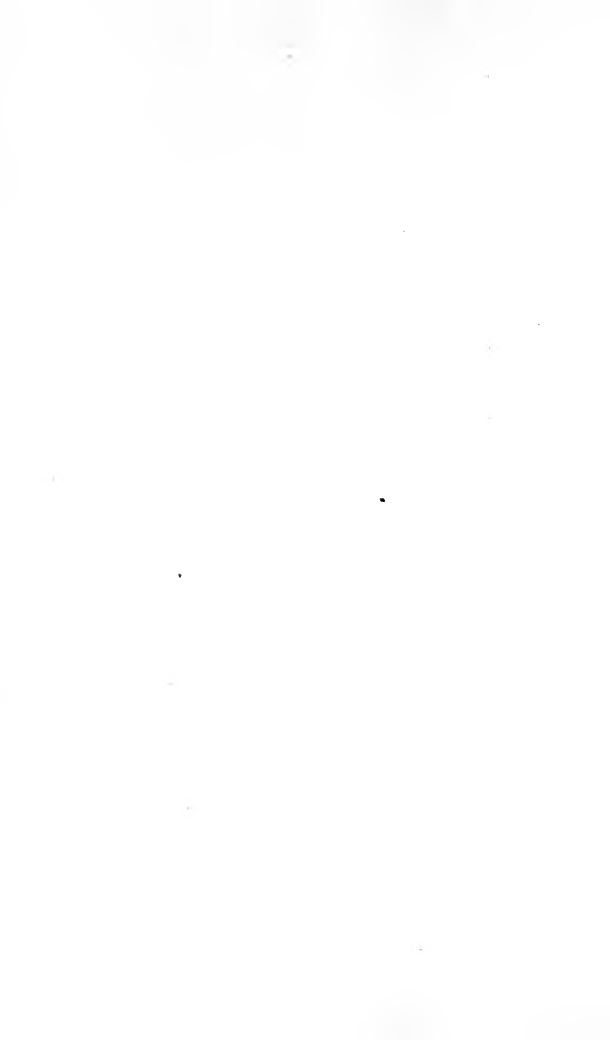


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TO  
MY MOTHER

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## HIGHLAND LIGHT

QUIET and dark and pure,— the breeze,  
Awestruck, no more the silence braves;  
Only the beat of tiny waves  
Echoes spent tumult of the seas.

For this has sleep its blessing kept,  
Sleep and the sea, to guard these men  
Who fought with hurricanes, and then  
Silently laid them down, and slept.

What faith is yours, that you can sleep  
Knowing your peril's utmost reach,  
Who never framed a prayer in speech  
To pierce the stillness of the deep?

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Trusting this hand upon the wheel,  
Sure that some other hand tonight  
Would wake the eye of yonder light,  
Knowing the hand that laid this keel

And nailed the timbers fast, wrought true,—  
Your whole lives lie in hands unknown,  
And yet you sleep. The gales have blown  
In vain against such men as you.

I claim your faith as mine. Untaught,  
You never learned that others' art  
Could speak for you, nor felt the heart  
Leap answering to immortal thought;

Toiling in darkness, you would win  
Living from life, yet found your way  
To faith. I, seeking more, can say  
The best I found is, we are kin.



## HIGHLAND LIGHT

So is it you stand close to me  
As never those who prayed and then  
Set themselves o'er their fellow men;  
I wonder if they know the sea,

That makes their God seem dim and small,  
Their God of bribes, and chosen days  
For service, and their forms of praise.  
I wonder if they pray at all

Beneath their jargon. Yes, they feel,  
Not what they say, or what they claim  
That they believe, but all the same  
They have life's blessing when they kneel.

Our way is simpler, but our eyes  
Are no less steadfast. So you sleep  
Tonight, and hands from out the deep  
Hold you, and from the earth and skies.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

We trust each other, and the best  
Life shows is only this. You wrought,  
Unknowing, to give faith, and taught  
That truth in which mankind is blessed.

Why should I, waking while you sleep,  
Watch, hand on wheel, but that I know  
Your faith has made a debt I owe?  
And, should I fail you, could I reap

Harvest of faith in other souls?  
How could I know that yonder light  
Will gleam till morning puts to flight  
The shadows, and the darkness rolls

Before the sunrise? No, we live  
To earn the hopes men have of us;  
We can win courage only thus,  
And have but just the faith we give.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Oh, what a peace rests on the sea  
Tonight! The stars stand still awhile,  
Saving for one, that seems to smile  
Because it, too, is near to me.

I think the stars love one another,  
Holding their ways because they know  
How each goes bravely on, and so  
Rests on his mate as on a brother.

They must love. Life is not alone  
Of trifles, for a meteor light  
Streams through impenetrable night,  
And love makes earth and sky its own.

Then darkness never falls again  
On us who, ere the lights depart,  
Have seen laid bare a human heart,  
Have known its beauty, and its pain.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

So, as of old the vision came  
To Moses on the sacred hill,  
The ancient glory lights us still,  
And we are never more the same.

We are the soul of all we see,  
For each like coral reefs is built  
Of others' hopes, and loves, and guilt,  
A myriad's immortality.

What fabled heaven could be so wide!  
This I that is all others roams  
To find in countless hearts new homes,  
And there, undying, shall abide.

Some spirit lifted out of strife,  
Some child made happier by a word,  
Some breast by beauty once more stirred,  
Some weary soul made glad of life.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

So we join hands, till sails are furled  
In harbor, touching other souls  
As wave against its fellow rolls  
To send its heart-beat round the world.

What need is left for bribe or threat?  
Why should the spirit beg for peace  
In worlds to come? It cannot cease;  
Life, seeming-blind, does not forget.

Each voice today is echoing clear  
That ever spoke since life began;  
What need of other worlds for man  
Knowing he is immortal here?

There is no life that death can slay;  
What if his sudden hand should smite  
Out of the silence of the night;  
My heaven was fashioned day by day.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

I ask but this, to serve as well  
As yonder light, not questioning how  
But faithful to its duty now ;  
What more it never seeks to tell.

So, guide to harbor safely these  
Your comrades, for your steady light  
Stands as our symbol of the right,  
Life's truth, across the swaying seas.

## LEAVES

DEAD leaves,  
All that endures of a golden past,  
Brown and withered and falling fast,  
Tears the tree sheds when it grieves  
Its summer's opulence could last  
Only to vanish overnight.  
Dead leaves — and yet  
They treasure memories of life and light,  
Of things we would not willingly forget,  
And hold the promise of a waking day,  
Earth richened by decay  
To youth and joy once more,  
To bear again  
The glorious burden that it bore  
Through centuries of pain  
Out of dead leaves.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Unmarked they lie,  
A sadness to the eye  
That sees no more than they, yet this one leaf,  
Hueless and shrunk and old, is still  
A symbol of all joy and grief,  
Of hope, and the indomitable will  
That builds the living future on the wreck  
Of present failure. In its texture sere  
Lies memory; its brittle weakness holds  
Promise of love, of summer come to deck  
The quickened woods with radiance. It unfolds  
Immortal language to the listening ear,  
And yet so few will hear.

Millions of leaves,  
Blown to the waiting earth  
That gave us birth  
And now its children to its breast receives;  
After our little summer-time of life.



## LEAVES

Torn from the trees  
By creeping autumn, or by gales of strife,  
Or by a wanton breeze,  
Some falling soon, some late;  
The last ones wait,  
Lonely and tremulous and very old,  
The touch of winter's fingers cold.

Dead leaves, like these —  
And yet endure the ancient trees  
We nourished, and that nourished us in turn.  
The earth grows younger with its age,  
And still the everlasting fires burn,  
And birth still mocks the rage  
Of all the winds that howl above the graves  
Of infinite centuries. And each,  
So silent, so unnoticed, yet can teach  
The utmost mystery of life,  
The love that heals, the hope that saves,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The quiet after strife.  
Each smallest one is all the world remembers,  
And all for which it grieves,  
And all the flame of life's undying embers,  
And summer come again,  
And joy, and pain —  
Dead leaves.

## AFTER SUNSET IN THE ROCKIES

QUIETNESS everywhere;  
The lake, that but an hour since was lashed  
Into a make-believe of ocean rage,  
Now lies beneath the eyes of heaven in calm  
Inscrutable peace, its twilight ecstasy  
Too pure for motion.

All around, the peaks,  
That in full day spoke terribly of strength  
And storm and struggle and of victory,  
With nightfall put their battered armor off;  
Benignly they draw near, and kindness  
Is in their silence.

Darker it grows,  
And stars pierce through the infinite depths of sky;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The colors fade and vanish, till the world —  
The silent lake, the cliffs and jagged peaks,  
The star-strewn vault above — all join together  
In blended darkness.

These selfsame crags  
But now were resonant with Valkyr shouts;  
The flames of battle played round each red peak,  
And through the air the cavalry of storm  
Drove their battalions, while the trumpet wind  
Sounded the charge.

Peace after turmoil,  
A peace as all-pervading as the dark,  
That purifies the heart of willfulness  
And all the insignificance of care,  
Comes with the silence down the mountain-slopes,  
The gift of night.

Nor time nor space  
Can draw their shadowy veils around the lake

## AFTER SUNSET IN THE ROCKIES

Calmed out of madness, and the rugged scars  
Healed by the loving fingers of the night,  
While in the sky the stars came quietly,  
And with them peace.

## THE SONG OF THE SHIP

A LONG farewell to your level land,  
Your fields ploughed deep with gold,  
Your towns where the great gray buildings stand  
To turn the sunshine cold;  
Enough of your smoke and your rattling mills,  
You prosperous, thrifty folk,  
With your tedious joys and pallid ills,  
For it's time to cast the yoke.

*The surf runs strong off Highland Light,*

*And the tide floods over the Rip;*

*The Nausetts are blinking across the night,*

*And I hear the song of the ship.*

Hark to the spray on the weather bows  
Where the southeast combers break

## THE SONG OF THE SHIP

From the rhythmic furrow the schooner plows,  
And the gurgle of the wake;  
Hear how the timbers their voices raise  
To the roar of running seas,  
The vibrant wail of the windward stays,  
And the steady boom of the breeze.

*The surf runs strong off Highland Light,*

*And the tide floods over the Rip;*

*The Nausetts are blinking across the night,*

*And I hear the song of the ship.*

Southeast by east our course we steer,  
Straight down for the Georges Bank,  
With only the northern gale to fear,  
And only ourselves to thank;  
A world away from the noise and fight  
Where never a man is free,  
With the sun by day and the stars by night,  
And the sky and the wind and the sea.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

*The surf runs strong off Highland Light,  
And the tide floods over the Rip;  
The Nausetts are blinking across the night,  
And I hear the song of the ship.*



## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

*The Lord set me down in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones; and he said unto me: Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.*

Ezekiel, 37.

\* \* \* \* \*

WE were the dwellers in the valley,  
Moving only as the earth moves rocks and stones,  
Dry, void of hope, without life,  
Yet doing all that is the business of bones.  
We were husband and wife,  
Son, father and mother,  
Kinsmen or neighbors one to another;  
We were many things, only there were no lovers  
Among us all, for the spirit of love,  
The soul that hovers  
Between the earth and heaven above,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Breathing eternity into a day,  
Had fled away,  
Shuddering, from the desolate valley.

But never believe we were idle; nay,  
We were a very bee-hive of bones.  
Life there is even where soul is none;  
The oak-tree groans  
When the gale smites it; the fires of earth  
Hurl rocks vainly against the sky,  
Mocking the mastery of the sun  
And teaching the ancient hills to fly;  
So among us there was birth,  
And seemly, decorous death, and giving in marriage,  
After the immemorial custom of bones for all time.

This one, with the lofty carriage  
And sightless eyes, we chose as our king,  
To rule us by old laws, without will,

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

Like the monarch of a nursery rhyme,  
Impotent for good or ill.

That one, with the ring  
Gripping the knuckle of his skeleton hand,  
We called the preacher of God's word,  
And bade him by the barren altar stand  
To speak the message that he never heard.

Oh, we were busy bones; we bought  
And sold, grew rich or poor, we taught,  
Nay, sometimes fought  
Without passion or knowing or caring why.  
But mostly, heaving as earth bade us,  
We labored dumbly to lay by  
Treasure of roots and moss and stones,  
Fruitless, since we were nought but bones,  
And the grave already had us.

Weary and toiling bones were we,  
Eyeless, never to see

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The cloudless kiss of morning, the great sweep  
Of waters marching shoreward from the deep,  
The sunset's walls of a flaming world,  
Or the lustrous banner of night unfurled;  
Never to hear  
The music of a human voice,  
Or the song of a bird,  
The quiver of a passionate word  
Aching with love, or hate, or fear;  
Never to make foreseeing choice  
Of joy, or pain,  
Or the extasy which only comes again  
Enfolded in the suffering that atones; —  
For these things are not in the world of bones.

And then he spoke,  
The prophet, and the silence broke  
In thunder; the rocks shouted; the waters gave  
tongue

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

To the omen; the tired earth grew young  
Beneath a rain of sunshine; all around  
The resonant hills poured echoes to the sound;  
The air in unimagined voices spoke;  
And we dry bones awoke.

But not forthwith; nay, one by one,  
Each in his fashion, heard  
The summons of God's word.  
Some sprang to living ere was done  
That first incredible organ-roll of speech,  
While others dimly woke; but unto each  
In his own time a message came  
From God, to speak his name,  
And bid him live.

One chanced upon a poor man, and he saw  
The pitiful eyes, and felt the need to give,  
He who had never given in all his life

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Till then ; and he looked up in holy awe  
To see God's mercy shining on the poor.

To one there came a clashing as of strife,  
The tramp of horse-hoofs on a blood-red moor,  
The cry of the weak  
Under the oppressor's scourge, who seek  
The help of the indomitable arm  
Of passion for a cause ; and straight  
He rose to meet the clamorous alarm  
Of battle, and the burning joy of hate,  
And victory, and pride ;  
And smiling he went forth, and fought, and died.

One, just at daybreak, heard  
The sun's first welcoming  
Sung for the whole world by a little bird.  
That note became his soul, and made  
His echoing pulses sing.

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

He heard the symphonies the tempests played,  
The surging orchestra of sea and sky,  
The voices of the stars,  
And the singing of men's hearts.  
And that with him the wonder should not die  
Even as the echo of a word departs,  
All that he heard within the bars  
Of music did he set,  
That men might hear, and nevermore forget.

One looked out into the uttermost depths of the  
west,  
As the sun lay for a moment golden on the world's  
rim;  
And the level rays burned into his breast  
The lyric glory of color, like a hymn  
To the gods of an older world.  
To him the mysteries of light were unfurled  
And the magic of the dark;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

And on his eyes was set the mark  
And on his hand,  
That he should paint God in his rocks and trees,  
His sunshine, and his mountains, and his seas,  
For men to understand.

And unto one there came a silentness  
More moving than the utmost sound could be,  
The silentness of thought made free  
To wander all among the stars, and guess  
Some fragment of the dateless mystery.  
And he, who in the fashion  
Of bones, had never loved, was filled with passion  
For silence, and he taught  
In silentness the majesty of thought.

Another looked upon a woman's face,  
A woman he had known, nor cared to know,  
Through all the barren years ere sight



## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

Was his, and lo,  
He saw that she was lovely, with the grace  
Of new-found faith upon her, and the light  
Of passion in her eyes; he heard her speak,  
Whispering low "I love you," and his cheek  
Knew the soft magic of her glorious hair.  
And that her lustrous beauty should not fade,  
But live forever fair  
For men to marvel at in days to come,  
He who was dumb  
Found language, and he prayed  
To God in praising her; his living prayer  
Enshrines her beauty through unending years,  
Triumphant over time, and tears,  
And death, and it has grown  
For every land and every age  
Part of the lover's heritage,  
For in the poet's love each man beholds his own.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

So was the prophecy fulfilled  
Of him who spoke the word of old  
Over the bones that God had willed  
Should lie no longer cold,  
Moving without a soul at earth's behest,  
And on the breast  
Of earth recumbent, but should rise to sing,  
Each in his tongue, God's glory, till the sea  
And land should ring  
With praise re-echoing to the skies  
In swelling harmony  
Made of unnumbered passionate tones,  
Chanting the ancient hymn that never dies  
Out of the sunlit valley of dry bones.

## SUNRISE IN VINEYARD SOUND

(In memory of L. W. C.)

ALONE we waited for the sun ; the sail  
Echoed the swelling pulses of the deep ;  
The twilight air woke softly from its sleep,  
And one by one the little stars grew pale.

The sea lay still beneath the silent sky  
As hueless as the headland, where the light,  
Still faithful to its vigil of the night,  
Watched over us with keen, recurrent eye.

And then,— as in some vast cathedral gray  
Across hushed worship rings the organ's voice  
Triumphant, till the very stones rejoice  
In answering harmony,— burst forth the day.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The shores leaped from the mist to meet the blue  
Of radiant waves; the breeze bore up the cry  
Of welcome from the waters, and the sky  
Flung morning's spendthrift glory forth anew.

And now all this is changed. The dear-loved  
plain,

The waters that were like a home, the shore,  
The green, dark hills, you cannot look on more,  
Nor see the wonder of the dawn again.

Now, when the foam is flying, and the breeze  
Whistles among the ropes, I shall not hear  
The voice I knew, nor see you standing near,  
Glad in the tumult of the tossing seas.

But you have left me, not to vain regret  
And sorrow only, for the leaping spray  
Brings me the miracle of that far day,  
And close beside me stands your spirit yet.

## SUNRISE IN VINEYARD SOUND

And then I know your work is not yet done,  
For ever in my heart will come the thrill  
Of strength new-born, as I shall see you still,  
Silently watching for the rising sun.

## WEST AND EAST

A **vast** new land, half wakened to the wonder  
Of mighty strength ; great level plains that hold  
Unmeasured wealth ; and the prophetic thunder  
Of triumphs yet untold.

A land of eager hearts and kindly faces,  
Lit by the glory of a new-born day ;  
Where every eye seeks the far-distant places  
Of an untravelled way.

Oh generous land ! Oh mighty inspiration  
That floods the morning of the world to be !  
Thy people are the builders of a nation,  
Lofty, benignant, free.

Yet, at a trivial word, a star's clear gleaming,  
A bird's sweet song, a sunset fading fast,

## WEST AND EAST

There comes a longing for the homeland, dreaming  
Upon its sacred past.

A land of dear, remembered faces, moving  
Through happy days that had to have an end;  
Each stream is a companion known and loving,  
And every hill a friend.

A longing to behold the mountains, rearing  
Their great, gaunt heads; and once again to be  
Upon the barren, wind-swept headland, hearing  
The surges of the sea.

## DON JUAN TO THE STATUE

Good monster, cease your pallid gibbering,  
Your solemn antics from the outworn school  
Of acting men call life. Could such a thing  
As you have grown awe one not all a fool?  
I knew that you would find me in the end,  
Nay, saw it clear before my day began,  
Felt how your leaden hand would seek to bend  
The thing you never were — an honest man.  
Honest, forsooth? You shake your stony head;  
The world's way ever. In that marble skull,  
So white, so honorable, and so dull,  
Is room for nought but echoes of the dead.  
You are the world itself, its rigid face  
Portentous in its smug dishonesty.  
Ah, does that hit you? You, of ancient race,



## DON JUAN TO THE STATUE

Honored and rich in lands, and what men call  
An “injured husband” — as if that should be  
Your double crown of virtue,—after all  
Taunted by Juan as a walking lie?  
Come, now, but which lived truer, you or I?  
“An honorable love, an unstained life!”  
What do you know of either, you who brought  
Your plaything home, a child, to be your wife  
In the same fashion that a horse is bought?  
Your honor lay in making her your own,  
Your chattel; if she had a pulsing heart  
You never knew it; all your care alone  
Was this, that no man else should have a part  
In any thought of hers. And so you fight,  
Measuring honor by your rapier’s play,  
Whoever dares to bring some fleeting ray,  
Some warming glow from God’s most holy light,  
Into that prison of hers your honor built.  
Kill him, you torture her; yourself be slain,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

And he is branded with the murderer's guilt,  
But holds the love he won, and all your gain  
Is that your petty world makes show to grieve  
To hide the mocking laughter in its sleeve.  
"Unending love!" God, what a lying knave!  
I wonder, have you ever loved at all,  
If passion for one moment lit that grave  
Important face of yours. The thing you call  
Love is but pride of owning, jealousy,  
The miser's pawing of his money-bags.  
Love! 'Tis vile blasphemy to name its free  
Untrammelled spirit, and your bond that drags  
Its weary chain a life-time, in a breath.  
Love is no slave of laws; it mocks at death,  
And laughs to scorn the petty policies  
That shape such lives as yours; it comes and goes  
As sudden and unfettered as the breeze.  
A word will quicken it, a word will slay.  
It is the purest light man's spirit knows,

## DON JUAN TO THE STATUE

A flame from heaven while lasts its burning day,  
Then night and dark. Undying? Keep the rose  
A twelvemonth fragrant! You and all your kind  
Would make a life-time sentence of a night  
Of wonder. Oh, you drive me mad, so blind,  
So false, and so tenacious of your right  
To rob God's creatures of their liberty.  
Now mark me. I have never sought to buy  
A slave, nor hold a woman less than free;  
I never sickened truth with honied lie,  
Prating of "honor," "love that cannot die";  
But when love's self came to me, when my heart  
And soul and body knew its extasy,  
Then I said this: "I love you, for a day,  
A month, a year, I know not. When we part,  
Let us be honest both, and bravely say  
That love is dead. I have but this to give,  
And ask no more but love in fair return.  
Peril I bring, but if you dare to live

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Free, true and noble, if you ever yearn  
To be the thing God meant you for, and not  
The slave life makes you, brave it, knowing well  
That you must stake love's heaven against man's  
hell.

Seek further nothing; would you share my lot,  
You cannot; I must go my chosen way  
While you go yours; no man can truly mate  
With woman when the lengthening shadows wait  
To cloud the evening of love's fleeting day.  
There is my heart, too honest for the cheat  
Of mouthing ceremony, or to play  
The farce life makes a tragedy of. We meet  
To love, nor question after."

Come then, say

If this be honesty or no. But then,  
Grant me one love, but what of all the rest?  
"Faithless" I hear you mumble. Why were  
men,  
And women too, the worst up to the best,

## DON JUAN TO THE STATUE

Not made by God with blessed power to change,  
To grow, to alter? Would it not be strange  
If any man should cast his likes and hates  
At birth into an iron mould, nor dream  
What miracle upon the morrow waits?  
Better by far to part before the gleam  
Has faded miserably, nor outstay  
Love's regency so much as by a day.  
Oh, you good, lying people! There, I come;  
Else will the cock's crow shriek your mouthing  
dumb,  
And all your righteous work will be to do  
Again. You conquer, after all; the weight  
Of life bears down the soul that dares be true,  
Braving the world and careless of its fate.  
So shall you stand for centuries to see,  
Marble and praised and false, albeit some,  
More wise, shall mock at you what time they come  
To gape; and close beside you I shall rest,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Unmarked, with flowers growing o'er my breast.  
Yet, would you write an epitaph for me,  
To tell the world I died beneath your ban,  
Conceive it thus: "Here lies an honest man."  
Nay, nay, I come. . . .

## TARPAULIN COVE

THE wind has fallen with the sun, and now  
Only its faintest murmur moves the air;  
The ripples whisper underneath the bow  
Like sleepy children's voices hushed in prayer.

The dreaming sea breathes slowly in its sleep;  
Only the stars are waking, and they lie  
Immeasurably distant in the deep  
Unfathomable darkness of the sky.

And so we creep to harbor, very still  
Amid the sleeping silence of the world,  
To where the schooners lie beneath the hill  
That watches o'er them when their sails are furled.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Among them like a new-come ghost we glide,  
Shatter the stillness with our anchor-chain,  
And as its echo dies away, the tide  
Of sleep floods shoreward from the sea again.



## FAITH

Not self, that strange, inconsequential thing,  
Half prophet and half fool, that blinks at truth,  
Selling the burning freedom of its youth  
    For gifts age may not bring.

Not fame, for when the whirling noise is still,  
The silence passes judgment, or forgets,  
And time alone, inexorable, lets  
    The good be known from ill.

Not dogma, mouthing at divinity,  
Setting an image in the holy place,  
Shrouding with words the truth's unswerving face,  
    Lest men, awakened, see.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Not the mean bribe of something after death;  
The spirit is too proud to sue for peace  
In worlds incredible, and fain would cease  
    With life's last yearning breath.

Not even love, so intricate with fear,  
Bruised by the uncouth hand of common life,  
A year's eternity, with death, or strife,  
    Or dimness waiting near.

Yet there is faith, the faith of work well done  
Because mankind is working; for the pain,  
The joy, the things we lose, the things we gain,  
    Unnumbered, yet are one.

Faith that we climb together o'er the bars  
Of hate, an army marshalled by a soul,  
Blind visionaries, struggling toward a goal  
    Among the singing stars.

## THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL THE SON OF GRIM

“Then came Arinbjorn by night from Erik the Bloody Axe, King of Northumberland, to the room where Egill lay, and said to him that the King and Queen Gunnhild had willed that Egill should be slain when morning came; and he counseled him, if yet he would save his head, that he should wake through the night and make a poem in praise of Erik, that perchance the King might still grant him his life.”

*Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I, EGILL, rover of the North, am cast  
Into your hands, and Erik's day at last  
Has come. I know the waves I yet shall see  
Tomorrow, ere I die, will beckon me  
Homeward in vain. The storm that stripped my  
deck  
Of men, and flung my ship, a broken wreck,  
Upon your barren shore, has brought me here

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

To look upon this king the Southrons fear.  
Go, tell your lord, Erik the Bloody Axe,  
That Egill fain would sleep; the writhing backs  
Of waves have borne me over long, and death,  
That follows with the sun, yet grants this breath  
Of quiet in the darkness. Say I rest  
Contented, nought of tumult in my breast.  
The sea I fought, and men, but will not fight  
Against the gods, that wait for me tonight.  
The day is his; darkness belongs to me.  
Tell him that, dead or living, I am free;  
His prison is my chosen resting-place.  
Go, tell him that, and tell him that the face  
Of Egill, doomed to die, has shown no fear.—  
It was to see me weep he sent you here.  
What should I know of sorrow? Deeds like these  
Of mine shall ring across the northern seas  
When Erik and his axe have been forgot  
In the grey mists of Niflheim. Each man's lot

## THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL

Is written, and the Norns will never heed  
Weeping or threats. In death there is no need  
For prayer, or hope, or fear. Say to your king  
That, ere I sleep, I once again shall sing,  
And fashion the last song that I shall make.  
Tell him, when in a nightmare he shall wake,  
Let him give ear, and there will come to him  
The battle-song of Egill son of Grim.

Alone.— They say that round the dying stand  
All who were known in life, by sea or land;  
So did the sorrowing gods in pity throng  
About Bald's bale-fire. Aye, there Bard the  
Strong

Watches me from the doorway,— him I slew  
At that brave feast in Norway, when I knew  
The mead-cup reeked with death. The chattering  
thralls

Bid to that mockery in Atley's halls

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Fled shrieking when I clove their master's head  
Down to the leering lips. And you, long dead,  
Come once again to look upon me! Now  
The fates have scored their rune upon my brow,  
But you, who sought to slay me long ago,  
Died by my hand, and I am glad.—

I know

Yon face beside you.—Thorolf, brother mine,  
Borne down by spears when, in the Saxon line,  
We two made firm his crown for Athelstan  
That mighty day at Vinheath. Never man  
Had truer friend than you. I come at last  
To feast with you in Valhall, but the past  
Has cleared the debt I owed you. I have slain  
The men who slew you, brother; none remain  
On Middle-Earth to boast your death unpaid  
By death. We two, together, unafraid,  
Shall seek tomorrow Odin's golden door,  
And speak as comrades with the mighty Thor.

## THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL

More faces in the shadows,— men who sailed  
With me from Kurland, when the darkness paled  
To morning, and the flame glowed far astern,  
The flame we kindled for a torch to burn  
The hearts of them we hated.— Other men,  
Comrades and foes in Iceland, from the glen,  
The mountain and the plain they come, for I  
Can never come to them. 'Tis good to die  
Since death brings me so close to all mankind,  
The living and the dead. I leave behind  
No grief that vengeance will not burn away.  
For, through the darkness, I can see a day  
Not long to wait, that threatens with the gleam  
Of ruddy sails; the flash of oars shall seem  
The lightning of Thor's anger. In the shout  
Of battle, and the tumult, and the rout,  
Shall Erik once more hark to Egill's voice.  
Few then shall be the Southrons who rejoice  
That I am dead.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

At morn the gulls will fly  
Northward to Iceland, and their shrilling cry  
Shall wake the distant sleepers with the word  
“Egill is slain!” even as the gods once heard  
The Gjallarhorn. Oh birds, that were my  
friends,  
Take up the song that forth your comrade sends;  
It is the heart of Egill ye shall bear  
Back to his home. This is the only prayer  
I make to Odin, that in Iceland long  
The cliffs shall echo Egill’s dying song.

Men of Iceland, mates of mine  
On field and furrowed sea,  
Bold in battle, seamen brave,  
Hewers of helms with me,  
Mindful of mighty blows full many  
We dealt in days gone by,  
Grind and gird ye the swords again;  
Doomed is Egill to die.



## THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL

Fearless forth to his fate he goes,  
Fearless he lived and free;  
Need of a master never he knew,  
At the call of a king to be.  
Ever the song of the sea he sang,  
Ever the song of the sword;  
Hollow the hearts that heard his voice  
In the land of the southern lord.

Hearken, Erik, give heed and hear,  
For a dead man's words are wise;  
Across the seas my song I send,  
Forth on the wind it flies;  
Egill's body you bear to the bale,  
But him you cannot kill;  
In a thousand hearts his home shall he have  
And his sword shall stay not still.

Glad the greeting I gave the sea,  
Glad did I greet the sun;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Wind and wave knew well my voice,  
And the beaches where breakers run;  
The biting blast was brother of mine,  
My kin were the clouds on high;—  
Are you fain to fight such mighty folk  
That you dare to let me die?

Long have I lived, and light of heart,  
Wealth have I won and fame;  
High on my hearth burned the fire of home  
When back from the battle I came.  
Gladly I go to the land of the gods  
Beyond the rainbow's rim,  
For the rocks and ridges of Iceland ring  
With the song of the son of Grim.

Now let the sun climb up the sky; I wait  
The day that bears the shadow of my fate  
Untroubled. I have fought, and bled, and won,  
And seen the happy end of work begun

## THE DEATH-SONG OF EGILL

In doubt and danger;— aye, and I have made  
A song that shall bear children. Unafraid  
I listen for the summons of the horn  
Of Heindall.— Yonder, cloudless, breaks the  
morn.

ON OFFENBACH'S "TALES OF  
HOFFMANN "

FANTASTIC child of moonlight, sing once more  
Love's unrealities to hoodwink time,  
Making of life a lotos-eaters' shore,  
And death a children's toy of pantomime.

Gladly we hear thy voice amid the laws  
And facts that bind us to remember pain,  
Echoing a world where nothing seeks its cause,  
Where no one grieves, and thought itself is vain.

Singing along the years, thou shalt possess,  
For all thy delicate substance, strength to free  
Men's hearts to moments of forgetfulness,  
Swaying content upon thy magic sea.

## STORM AT SEA

NIGHT, hot and breathless; sails that flap, and  
spars

Creaking like souls in an uneasy sleep;  
The weary writhings of the windless deep;  
Above, the dying fires of the stars,  
Which one by one go out behind the pall  
That creeps above the dark horizon wall.

A sudden gust, the snap of ropes pulled tight,  
The ship's quick heeling to the northern blast,  
A calm,—then other gusts that follow fast,  
And we go driving headlong through the night,  
Blackness above, black water at the rail,  
Blackness ahead, and on our heels the gale.

No light except the binnacle's white stare,  
No human sound above the steady crash

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Of breaking seas, that wind-flung come to lash  
The steersman's face; and howling everywhere,  
Through quivering shrouds, around the topmasts  
    stark,  
The hurtling wind re-echoes through the dark.

The long-enduring hours go their way  
In a monotony of ceaseless motion,  
Till a wan grayness shows the whirling ocean  
Beneath the clouded coming of the day.  
Then, in each others' faces gaunt and white  
Silent we read the fury of the night.

## LEUCONOE

(After the Latin of Horace)

SEEK not to know, for it is wrong, what fates the  
                  gods decree,

Nor try in vain, Leuconoe, the fortune-teller's  
                  art;

Far better is it to endure whatever is to be,  
Whether for many winters still we linger, or  
                  depart

With that which now against the cliffs drives on  
                  the Tyrrhene sea.

Be wise; let distant hopes not cheat the present  
                  from your heart.

While we are speaking Time flies past, and follow  
                  him we must;

Enjoy today; tomorrow is a thing we may not  
                  trust.

## BURIAL

WHY should my death endure for countless years?  
I would not have this frame, when I am dead,  
Become a thing to think upon with dread,  
But cease together with its hopes and fears.

Nor would I leave this life, so sweet and brief,  
And all my friends, to lie long ages through,  
Decaying mockery of the man they knew,  
Within a city consecrate to grief.

No; let the kindly flames make all men free  
To think of me as once I was; and lest  
My ashes speak unbidden, let them rest  
In the enfolding silence of the sea.



## BEGGARS IN AMERICA

(1913)

“Do you speak German?” I, half scared, half  
vain,

Debated for a moment, then, “*Ja wohl;*  
*Was kann ich für Sie thun?*” And so he spoke.  
His voice was something like one I had heard  
Long years ago — a very learned man,  
Discoursing about Plato. What he said  
Was rather time-worn. Immigrant — two  
months —

Loved gardens — tended flowers — something  
vague

Mumbled about the *veilchen* — now no work —  
No money — no one understood his talk,—  
“I used to have a home near Freiberg; now  
I am a beggar in America.”

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Lies, doubtless; yet about his face there clung  
A sort of dignity; his measured voice,  
As if reciting some dull author's poems,  
Rang neither true nor false, but tired out,  
Wearied with lying or with life — who knows?  
His pale blue eyes were tired, too — a look  
That I have seen cloud up an actor's face  
When, having played a part five hundred times,  
And played it well, and made his smiling bow,  
He goes back to his dingy dressing-room.—  
“I used to have a home near Freiberg; now  
I am a beggar in America.”

Well, be it so; he was an actor too,  
Long overburdened with the part he played.  
Perhaps he told the truth; what matters that?  
Part truth, part lies, I fancy. That I gave  
More than he asked did not disturb him much.  
With that same weary dignity of his  
He thanked me, saying little, and was gone.

## BEGGARS IN AMERICA

Whither? I asked a righteous woman, firm  
In organizing love, and she declared,  
Outraged, he wanted drink. Well, then, he did.  
Perhaps, half blinded, clinging to a bar,  
He saw the home near Freiberg, and forgot  
He was a beggar in America.

We are all beggars, brother,— far too like  
To feel mistrust. Some beg, as you, perhaps,  
For just a moment of forgetfulness;  
Some beg for memories we cannot hold;  
Some beg for love, for understanding hearts  
With thoughts unbounded by the spoken word;  
Others for fame, that men we do not know  
May look, and speak our names; some beg for  
peace  
And respite from the toil of going on;—  
God, what do men not beg for! And like you  
We find so few who understand the tongue  
That can alone express the thing we are.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Waiting for sympathy that does not come —  
The help that seems so easy to be given,  
So hard to ask,— do we not all look back  
To some far day within a peaceful house,  
Our own in the dim spirit's fatherland,  
A house we lightly left, nor ever thought  
We should be beggars in America?

Go, eat or drink, good friend. I too have asked,  
And had men wonder what my jargon meant;  
I too have asked, and seen men turn away.  
Yes, and at times I too have heard, "*Ja wohl,*  
*Was kann ich fur Sie thun?*" and looked in eyes  
That answered mine. Whatever strength I have  
Is mine through charity of theirs. Thank them  
That you are drunk tonight, or, it may be,  
That you sit writing letters to your home.  
Should I be drunk or sober,— who can say?  
Half honest, both of us, and weary both,

## BEGGARS IN AMERICA

Wholly improvident, we two can see  
The little house near Freiberg still, thank God,  
Though we are beggars in America.

## TO THE MIDDLE AGES

PROMISE before the dawn; not glory yet  
Of wakened morning, but the misty light  
That veils the waters ere the moon is set,  
When phantom ships go sailing into night.

Heroic twilight of undying names,  
Of glowing deeds wrought by gigantic men,  
Of Sigurd glorying amid the flames,  
Of Roland slain in the Iberian glen,

Long since the skies were flooded with the day,  
Yet shall men ever hear with quickening breath  
How Erik's son sailed on the Western Way,  
And Taillefer rode singing to his death.

## THE SHADOW

Slow pulsing of the heart that whispers death,  
And forehead cold with mists of endless night,  
The moving lips that shudder at the breath,  
And eyes that stare for light.

Yet nought have you to fear the dark can hide,  
But she who silent waits, nor dares to stir  
Lest Death creep past her, tearless at your side,  
God, God! O pity her.

## NIL DESPERANDUM

THEY say that Teucer, even when he fled  
His father and his Salaminian home,  
Yet bound a poplar crown about his brows,  
And spake these words to his unhappy friends:  
“Wherever fate, more generous to us  
Than to our sires, shall lead us, we will go,  
O friends and comrades. Nought is void of hope  
When Teucer is your chief and guardian.  
For truly did Apollo promise us  
Another Salamis for days to come  
In a new land. Oh ye, strong men and true,  
Who long with me have suffered evil things,  
Now drive away your cares with easeful wine.  
Tomorrow onward o’er the mighty sea.”



## THE SHORE

THERE is a desolate waste beside the sea,  
Long reaches of gray sand, whereon the waves  
Beat their monotonous and endless march;  
And all the shore in utter dreariness  
Yearns for the gleam of sails furled long ago.  
Only the restless seagulls know the place,  
And screaming mock its deathly loneliness.  
But there are voices from the swaying sea,  
And there are voices in the living air;  
And now the gulls are silent, and the sea  
Murmurs its world-old sorrow.

Then a voice:—

From the ashes of the past,  
From the gladness and the pain,  
From the first and from the last,  
I remain.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Though the stars forever strive,  
Yet their strife is still the same;  
I am all that shall survive:  
I am Fame.

Wandering like a dream across the waste  
It wailed upon the wind; and far and near  
There came a dreary echo —“ I am Fame.”  
And ever and anon, as back and forth  
Amid the desolation swept the voice,  
Through the still air it quivered —“ I am  
Fame.”

And a lone gull cried out in answer to it.

And now a mist, as gray as the gray sand,  
Lay heavy on the sea, and in the mist  
That bound the world there was a voice so old  
That life became eternal weariness:—

## THE SHORE

Lo, I am Power; in an iron hand

I hold the stars; my voice can call to life  
The silent dead, and make the sun to stand.

The earth is mine, and all the depths unknown  
Are mine; and in a ring of endless strife  
Are reared the flaming bulwarks of my throne.

And then the voice died into nothingness.

And from the east there came a sounding wind  
That drove the mist before it, and behind  
There followed a great coldness. All the earth  
Shivered; the air was visible with cold.  
And then, as distant as the frozen moon,  
Arising out of nowhere, everywhere,  
From sea and sky and earth, came forth a voice:—

Life is an endless waste of vain desires,  
Of empty labor and unfruitful years;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

And all the myriad little hopes and fears  
Are passing flames of everlasting fires.

I am the end of all things; and the breath  
Of man is incense and a fleeting dream  
That I have long forgotten in the gleam  
Of never-ending life; for I am Death.

Then there was silence over all the world,  
And vacant misery and unknown fear,  
And through the clouds the cold gray hand of  
Death,—

When suddenly there came a western wind,  
And the long level shafts of the warm sun  
Lay on the waters like an aureole.  
The desolate sands turned golden, and the air  
Thrilled into living motion. Then from out  
The mist of sunset came a singing voice:—

Into the emptiness of night,  
Tossed by the winds in surging strife,

## THE SHORE

The voices take their flight;  
Ever they wander to and fro,  
Mocking the thing they cannot know,  
The truth of love in life.

They are but echoes of the world,  
Back from the hollows of the sky  
In shadowy madness hurled;  
Never to bend what they yearn to sway,  
Nor dim the courage of the day,  
The hope that shall not die.

Then there was silence up and down the shore,  
Bathed in the sunset's glory; and the world  
Faded to gold; and all the dreariness  
Had vanished with the voices down the wind.

## ON THE TRAIN — MARCH

God! What a country:

Flat, rusty, desolate fields,

Flecked with puddles of dingy snow,

Houses unpainted, haphazard in a wilderness of  
man's making,

Breeders of creeping madness;

Towns — cities perhaps —

Made of factories, freight yards, hovels and  
churches;

And all — fields, people, towns —

Utterly flat and dreary.

Wait. When next you come

Spring will have whispered the fields to life;

Foliage will have cast its mystery about the wan  
houses,

## ON THE TRAIN—MARCH

God's trees will hide the churches;  
And in people's eyes  
Will shine a light, such as shone from Moses' face  
    of old;  
And, like him, unaware  
Of the myriads that turn to them for help,  
They will look out over their wide fields,  
And go thither to their labor.

## THE VOYAGERS

WE were weary of our prison, with its wheels that  
grind and roar,  
Till we broke the bonds that held us there, and  
knew that we were free,  
Till the walls were far behind us, and the morn-  
ing star before,  
And the life that knows no master, and the surg-  
ing of the sea.

So we built a ship and manned her, and we left  
the seething town,  
And we reached the Northern Ocean, where the  
ice-fields heave and groan,  
And they fettered us and bound us, while the  
mocking sun looked down,  
And we froze, and starved, and gloried, for the  
toil was all our own.



## THE VOYAGERS

Then back we came and wearily we sought the  
trodden way,  
And we left the ship at anchor, and we thought  
our work was done;  
Till we looked across the waters, and we heard the  
leaping spray  
Laugh to scorn our dull contentment in a peace  
we had not won.

So we manned our ship a second time, and sailed  
her round the world,  
Twenty months of wave and tempest, till we  
reached the kindly shore;  
Then we brought her back to harbor, once again  
her sails we furled,  
And we swore by all the gods of earth to sail the  
sea no more.

But the winds still call us onward to the prize we  
cannot gain,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

And rest is dreary to the soul as meadows to the  
eye;

Let us leave the land behind us, let us launch the  
ship again,

And we'll sail for worlds undreamed-of, sail for-  
ever till we die.

## EVENING SONG

OVER the water a gleam,  
The breathless light of a star,  
Guiding me over the waste of sea  
Back to the harbor bar.

Over the water a breath,  
The wind's faint, tremulous sigh,  
Drifting across the silent waves,—  
And none can hear but I.

Over the water a voice,  
Tender and soft and true,  
Borne on the shafts of the dying sun,  
Calling me back to you.

## MARSTON MOOR

HE left us at the break of day,

His laugh rang clear, his eyes were bright,  
He kissed the rose he bore away,  
And singing rode into the fight.

At noon they said the day was won;

At eve they said the day was lost;  
And till that weary night was done  
We heard the trees moan, tempest-tossed.

At dawn they brought him home again,

His brow was cold and wet with dew;  
And by his side we watched in pain,  
And no one spoke, the whole day through.

## ON AN ICELANDIC SKALD

(Egill Skallagrimsson)

SINGER and conqueror of battles vast

With sea, and earth, and men in days of yore,  
Father of mighty sons, who on the shore  
Of barren Iceland reared a house to last  
The generations of an age long past,  
Now do thy kinsmen hear thy voice no more,  
Nor ever shall they see thy flame-tipped oar  
Lash the white spray to meet the bending mast.

Ten centuries weigh down upon thy grave;

Yet one still hears thy song, and sees thy face,  
Stern, battle-scarred, unyielding; for the  
wave

That thunders on to work the east wind's will

Makes his heart sing with the old gladness still,  
And tells him we are of the selfsame race.

## UNDROWNED

THE staysail's fast, thank God. My hands are  
cut;

I'd look at them if it were not so dark.

But then, what matter? And why work so hard  
To lash a useless sail the wind tore loose?

There isn't any chance. An hour more,  
And then the sands. God, but it's dark. Per-  
haps

If we could see it would be even worse.

I'll take the wheel again if we're afloat  
At daybreak — but of course we'll all be dead  
Long before that. John's got a steady hand,  
He'll hold her,— and my arms were getting numb.  
I'm glad he took her for awhile. Old John,  
I'm sorry that he's got to drown. . . .

## UNDROWNED

Oh, Lord,

It's cold. And how I used to hate the job  
Of man-handling the furnace back at home!  
I hate this feeling numb, and soaked as well,  
All clammy, like an oyster. You can't drown  
An oyster, though; and even if you could,  
I don't suppose he'd mind. Well, do *you* mind?  
Wake up, you jackass, you've an hour left,—  
An hour, do you hear?—in which to live.  
Think of your past, the way they do in books.  
You've got your chance to act a leading part  
In melodrama. . . .

Oh my Lord, it's cold.

What's happened to the starboard light? Gone  
out,  
Smashed, maybe, for the water drives like shot.  
Well, that's no matter either.—Poor old John,  
I wonder, does he mind this getting drowned?  
He used to write such funny, stupid poems

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

All about life and death. He didn't know.

Does he know now? . . .

We've just about an hour,  
And then — John's chance is better than the rest,  
He swims so like a whale. Poor Dicky, now,  
He'll go down with a single bubbling grunt;  
And as for me — oh, I'll be drowning too. .  
It's queer. Tomorrow morning, I suppose,  
Things will go on, only I won't be there  
To see them. Hope my body won't be found.  
They'll have enough to stand at home without  
That horror.— Here's the biggest wave of all!  
She's knocked clean over. Can she make it?

There,  
The bow swings up,—she's righting. Good old  
John.

. . . Try to remember that you're going to die.  
This is a rotten time to be so calm,  
But you'd think better if you weren't so cold.



## UNDROWNED

Don't miss the chance; you can't do this again.  
How many vivid pictures of your past  
You ought to see,— the house where you were  
    born,  
The home you never held quite dear enough,  
The men you liked or hated, and the girls  
You never kissed.— Now there's old John, a poet,  
Or pretty nearly one,— does he see things?  
I'm damned if I do. I don't want to drown,  
Of course, but life like this is beastly cold.—  
My watch is in my suitcase; that's too bad,  
It might have stayed at home. Then — so might

I.

I wonder. . . .

Here, what's that? Some crawling fool  
Butting me in the stomach! Dick? Of course  
I didn't hear you. No. Speak louder, man.  
What's that? Oh, John's all in? Well, I'll be  
    there.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Wedge yourself in against the mast — like that;  
I'd hate to have you drown ahead of time.

. . . Now to get aft. It wouldn't do to stand.  
I'll fetch it somehow. There's the cabin hatch,  
Leaking like hell, of course. The wheel-box next.  
Good, there it is. Here, John, unleash yourself;  
I've got the wheel. Climb off and go below.  
No, you can't get there. Roll up in your coat  
There, down to leeward of me. That will keep  
Some of the water off you. Good old John,  
You've done a bully trick.— He doesn't hear  
A word I say. No matter. . . .

Thank the Lord

The binnacle stays lighted. North by east  
Half east. I didn't think she'd do that well.—  
Hard over! Now swing back. God! it feels  
good

To get my fingers on the spokes once more.  
No use in it, of course, and yet we'll fight

## UNDROWNED

The thing right to the end. You're doing well,  
Old girl, and heaven knows you've stood enough  
To smash you before this. Now what a joke  
If we should stay alive! I'll bet that John  
Has got his epitaph all studied out.—  
Hard over once again!—I'll fool old John.

## FEBRUARY

Look how fast the snow is sifting  
Through the close-meshed sky,  
Silence on its pinions drifting  
As the colors die;  
Shadows gray to darkness stealing  
Gather round about;  
All the world tonight is feeling  
Old and tired out.

Never mind; the winter's chillness  
Only waits for spring,  
And behind the snowflakes' stillness  
Hear the robins sing;  
Voice of leaf and grass and flower  
Wakened every one

## FEBRUARY

Underneath the golden shower  
Of the spendthrift sun.

There's a day in June before us,  
Lustrous green and blue,  
Winds like heartbeats pulsing o'er us  
Quick with rapture new;  
Can't you feel the sunshine glowing,  
Smell the good green earth  
Breathing extasy of growing  
In the spring's rebirth?

On that day of days, together  
You and I will go  
Out into the gleaming weather,  
Where, none else shall know;  
Go where centuries of beauty  
Crowd into a day,  
Leave the world, and care, and duty  
Endless miles away.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Then, with all the summer's gladness  
    Mirrored in your eyes,  
From the woodland's June-time madness,  
    From each bird that flies,  
From the sunshine, you'll discover,  
    From the skies above,  
What it means to have a lover,  
    What it means to love.

So, we'll watch the tide of darkness  
    Creeping through the snow,  
Blotting out the houses' starkness  
    In its silent flow.  
We can wait awhile together —  
    Waiting's over soon —  
Dreaming of the golden weather  
    Of a day in June.

## TWENTY-ONE

TELL me not of lovelorn shades,  
Groping through the world in sadness,  
Sickly youths and morbid maids,  
And a love that burns to madness.

Underneath the cheerful sun  
Tears are pitifully plenty,  
Logical at sixty-one,  
Imbecile at one-and-twenty.

Give me all the sunlit air,  
And a girl who loves fine weather,  
And we'll wander — who knows where —  
Gaily through the year together.

## WEST WIND

GLIDING athwart the misty years  
Like the murmur of a breeze,  
You breathe away the unshed tears  
Of numbed expectancies.

We met so oft, yet never met,  
Our thoughts dwelt far apart,  
Till suddenly your face was set  
Like a lamp within my heart.

I who was mute have found new voice,  
Blinded, you bring me sight,  
And wake my spirit to rejoice  
At weariness grown light.



## WEST WIND

The summer breeze will sink and die  
As softly as it came,  
But the heart it touched in passing by  
Will never be the same.

## DRESSES

### *White*

RIPPLING light of a summer's day  
Where the west wind laughs as he dances by ;  
The white of your dress is the clouds at play,  
The blue of your eyes is the glowing sky,  
The gold of your hair is the sunbeam's ray,  
And the wind that laughs, and the birds that fly,  
And the water's gleam, and the morning dew,  
And the violet's fragrance, are all in you.

### *Old Rose*

A picture out of courtly France,  
Of music and of dance,  
Where lovers' eyes caressing strayed  
O'er beauties half-displayed ;

## DRESSES

Fragonard is it, or Watteau,  
Whose art you come to show,  
Filling with living loveliness  
Their miracle of dress?

### *Gray*

Lucky furs, that keep the cold out,  
Keep you warm and snug,  
There's a tempting hope they hold out  
Of a bear-like hug;  
If this hope does not deceive me,  
Shed your furs of grey;  
I can keep you warm, believe me,  
Quite as well as they.

### *Green*

The budding message of the spring  
Gleams in its folds,  
The May-time's happy welcoming  
Its texture holds;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Bosom and shoulders shining white  
Through veil of green,  
As through the opening leaves the light  
Of dawn is seen.

### *Red*

The red rose breathes of passion, and the flame  
Is red as blood; both flame and rose are you;  
To fashion you love's sudden lightning came  
To meet the flower's fragrance, and its hue.  
What sweetness have you left in all the rest  
Of life, who took so much for only this,  
To make me long to hold you to my breast,  
And draw your soul out in a blinding kiss?

### *Black*

Night frames the moon's pure loveliness; so here  
The soft black clings about your radiance clear;  
White arms and neck and lustrous hair, and eyes

## DRESSES

Twin stars grown loving in the sombre skies ;  
You are the moonlight's magic, standing thus,  
Darkness made luminous.

## APRIL

THEN from the waking fields the lark arose  
Soaring, and sang once more; the glancing  
streams

Laughed in the lazy sunlight; and o'er all  
There came the warm, sweet breathing of the  
spring.

And now, from out the wintry castle walls  
Rode forth, with flash of gold on rein and spur,  
The baron and his comrades to the hunt.  
And through the glades there rang the silver sound  
Of horns, and the deep baying of the dogs,  
And joyous call of hunter to his mates;  
While down on all there smiled the kindly sun.

## JULIET

HE used to wonder about Romeo and Juliet,  
About them and others like them  
Who, in a sudden glance,  
So the poets maintained, beheld each other as the  
sole centers of all life.

Then he said, "It was their youth.  
Long dreamers of love, passion made lovers of  
them.

By youth alone is this thing possible,  
Nor was I so unlike them, once."

So he thought, and went about his business,  
Feeling very old, and settled, and calm,  
For what further had he to do with passion?  
Then — he has never known why —

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

A woman gazed at him steadily from eyes that  
seemed like music,  
And he felt his eyelids tighten as he looked  
through her eyes into her passionate heart.  
Then he knew that the poets had seen the truth,—  
And yet they were neither of them young.



## THE TRIUMPH OF TAMBURLAINE

*First there comes a captain:*

BE glad, all ye that sorrow, and rejoice;  
For come is Tamburlaine, the godlike one.  
And he hath bound the seas beneath his sway,  
And yoked the sun to draw his chariot.  
His voice is thunder and the sounding gale,  
And as the strength of morning is his might.  
Make way, make way for Tamburlaine the Great.

*Then follows a troop of captive kings, singing:*

Sound of chains that gnaw our hands,  
The hissing song the whiplash sings,  
Fit music for a band of kings.

Barren and void the altar stands,  
Our palaces are filled with dread,  
Our homes are cities of the dead.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The gods lie broken through our lands,  
They battled and were overthrown,  
For Tamburlaine is god alone.

*Then marches a band of soldiers, singing:*

Oh, the East has bowed its head,  
And the West has feared to die,  
And the South with blood was red,  
When Tamburlaine passed by.

Oh, the gods themselves have fled  
From their homes above the sky,  
For their hearts were sick with dread  
When Tamburlaine passed by.

*Then, on a golden car, comes Tamburlaine:*  
Silence this tumult that offends the skies.  
Why do ye look on me and call me god?  
I am no god. These jewels, what are they?  
Ay, though they dim the gleaming star of night,

## THE TRIUMPH OF TAMBURLAINE

Of what avail is all their loveliness?  
Or what will profit me yon haggard slaves,  
That like mute oxen drag their weary limbs?  
I care not for them, for beyond the sea,  
Within the sunset's golden mist enwapt,  
There lies a land that knows not of my name;  
Nor ever shall know, for the veil of death  
Will sink about mine eyes ere that can be.  
I cannot reach it, and all else is nought.  
And I am very weary of my life,  
Since life is all too short to reach the goal.  
And still they look on me and call me god!

## WITH A BOOK OF POEMS

I HAVE no words to praise you ; should I speak,  
My words would cast but shadows of the truth,  
Faltering upward, leaden-footed, weak,  
They that should rise on the strong wings of youth.

As through night's darkness one beholds the sun  
Clear in the eye of memory, whose sight  
Is stricken till the glowing day is done,  
So am I blinded in your beauty's light.

And, since my love so dwarfs my utmost speech,  
I, who long played with words, must silent stand ;  
Yet have you taught me to the skies to reach,  
Plucking the stars down with unfaltering hand,

And making poets of old my service do,  
Since, whatsoe'er they wrote, they dreamed of you.

## FOUR SONGS

### I

LIGHT of the world,  
Yet from her eyes shine forth the fairer rays,  
A wonder of imagined days,  
Silent and deep.

Light of my world,  
Yet shall the dimmer rays outshine your eyes,  
When all your luminous magic lies  
In dreamless sleep.

### II

I looked upon the wonder of thine eyes,  
And saw fair Love enthroned there like a star;  
Love quivered in thy voice as from afar  
The singing of a lark in sunlit skies.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

I saw the inmost temple of thy heart,  
The shrine of Love, but Love I found not there;  
He mocked me from thy lips and gleaming hair,  
And so we two in bitterness must part.

### III

#### *The Two Loves*

In eager hope I fled to love and thee:  
I never knew that joy could die so fast;  
A mocking future and a phantom past,  
No more is left to me.

The breathless silence of the silent night,  
The level reaches of the swaying sea  
Are in thine eyes, and mirrored there for me  
Is Love's own perfect light.

### IV

She does not love me,  
She whom I love so much, but like a star

## FOUR SONGS

Goes on her way, my only heaven, so far —  
A world — above me.

The dewdrop all in vain  
Longs for the bosom of the heedless cloud;  
Such love have I, and, loving her, am proud —  
And pride is near to pain.

## A VILLANELLE OF THE GALLOWS

(Old French)

THE Wind of Death through the darkness moans,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

The leafless tree it creaks and groans  
Beneath its heavy burdens three,  
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

Its burdens fleshless corpses be,  
The hungry birds have picked their bones,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

He calls them down with mocking tones,  
As on the whirlwind dance the three,  
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.



## A VILLANELLE OF THE GALLOWS

The first a thief of low degree,  
His puny soul the demon owns,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

Beside him rattle a murderer's bones,  
And scorched in hell his soul shall be,  
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

The third from battle once did flee,  
Fearing the shafts and whizzing stones,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

His soul beneath the gibbet groans,  
And dreads whate'er its fate may be,  
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans.

But barred from hell that soul shall be,  
Nor heaven shall rest the coward's bones,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Forever 'neath the tree it groans,  
Nor hell nor heaven it dares to see.  
The Wind of Death through the darkness moans,  
The Devil sits by the leafless tree.

## THE CARAVAN

ON through the burning sand,  
Under the burning sky,  
With the sun like a glowing brand,  
And the hot winds singing by,  
Where for endless miles on either hand  
The shimmering deserts lie.

Night stalks over the plain,  
And the blinding whirlwinds roar;  
A cry for rest from pain,  
And the town that waits before;  
At the journey's end to turn again  
And face the sands once more.

## THE QUESTION

Love, when you and I are dead,  
Shall our souls be lovers yet,  
And remember, or forget?

Love, when you and I are old,  
Are there roses in the fall,  
Or is springtime past recall?

Now, when you and I are young,  
Dare we trust a distant year,  
Shall we hope, or shall we fear?

## LONELINESS

THE throngs go by, nor tell me where they go;

They move as in a dream,

As shadows which I know yet cannot know.

In mute, phantasmal train

Their pantomime sweeps on and on again,

A show where nothing is, and all things seem.

What solitude of tempest-cradled isle

Could ever be so drear?

Men come and go, and all with joyless smile

In silentness pass by.

I wonder, will they turn when I shall die

To mark one lost among the shadows here.

## THE LOVE POTION.

(After the German of Gottfried von Strassburg)  
*Circa 1200*

EASTWARD from Ireland sailed Tristan forth,  
And with him Iseult, but the queen spoke not,  
Weeping and grieving sore, that from her land,  
Where she knew people, and from all her friends  
She now was gone, and with a stranger folk  
Was faring to a land she did not know.  
And Tristan ever strove to comfort her,  
But Iseult held her peace, for still she thought  
Upon her kinsman Morolt, slain of old  
By Tristan's sword. But, for he sought full oft  
To know the reason of her silence, sudden  
She spoke to him, and told him of her thoughts.

“And could atonement for my kinsman's death  
Be made, and were it made,” she said, “no less

## THE LOVE POTION

Should you be hated of me. I was free  
Of care and sorrow till you came to us,  
And you alone have brought this sadness down,  
With craft and daring, on me. Oh, what fate  
Sent you from Cornwall into Ireland  
To work me harm? From those who cared for me  
Since childhood have you taken me; and now  
Lead me I know not where. How I was bought  
To be the loveless bride of yon King Mark  
I know not, nor what waits in store for me."

Then Tristan, heavy-hearted, left the queen  
Amid her maidens, but ere long she sent  
To speak with him again; and as the hours  
Passed softly by, she kept him at her side;  
And though her lips spoke only of her grief,  
Another voice was speaking in her heart.

So they sailed ever onward, and the sea  
And wind alike were fair; but soon the maids,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Iseult and her companions, never fain  
Of wind and wave, were sore in need of rest.  
Then Tristan bade them put to land awhile,  
To find a harbor, and the company  
Scattered along the shore; but Tristan went  
To greet his lady fair, and at her side  
He stood, and as they talked of this and that  
He called for wine.

Now, saving for the queen,  
Were none but little damsels in the ship;  
And one said, "See, here in this flask is wine."  
It was not wine that stood therein, though like  
In hue and taste, but pain, and bitter grief,  
And endless longing of the heart, whereof  
They two at last should die.

But of all this  
The little maid knew nought, so straight she went  
To where the flask was hid, and brought it forth,



## THE LOVE POTION

And gave to Tristan. Then he poured, and gave  
The cup to Iseult. All unknowingly  
She drank, and soon she gave the cup again,  
And Tristan drank, and neither knew the draught  
For aught but wine. And on the sudden came  
The servant Brangaene, and she saw the flask,  
And knew what ill was done. And all her strength  
Was reft from her by fear, and she was pale  
As death, and in her breast her heart lay dead.  
Then straight she seized the evil-working flask,  
And cast it forth into the midmost sea.

“ Oh wretched me ! ” she said within herself,  
“ That ever I was born into this world !  
Oh miserable ! now how have I lost  
Honor, and broken faith ! Oh, would to God  
That I had never come upon this journey,  
That death had taken me before I sailed  
This evil voyage with Iseult ! Now alas,  
Tristan and Iseult, for the drink is death.”

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Now, when the maiden and the man, Iseult  
And Tristan, both had drunk, then suddenly  
Came love, who layeth siege to every heart,  
And never rests, and in their hearts he crept.  
And ere they knew he raised his banners there,  
And held them both his subjects. They were now  
But one and undivided, who before  
Were two, and foes. The hate that Iseult bore  
To him was gone. The reconciler, love,  
Had purified their hearts from all ill-will,  
And joined them so that each unto the other  
Was clear as is a mirror. But one heart  
Had both; her sadness was his grief, his grief  
Her sadness. Both were one in love and sorrow;  
Yet both would keep it hid, in doubt and shame.  
For howsoever blindly were their hearts  
Bent to one will, the chance and the beginning  
Were heavy to them; so they strove alike  
To hide their longing.

## THE LOVE POTION

Tristan, when he felt  
This love, straightway bethought him of his faith  
And honor to his lord; and fain would turn  
And free himself. Thus vainly did he strive  
Against his longing; would what he would not;  
And like a captive struggled in his bonds.  
So went the strife in him, for when he looked  
In Iseult's eyes, and sweet love stirred his heart  
And drew his soul, then ever did he feel  
How honor held him back. But love at last,  
For now he was love's vassal, won his heart,  
And made him follow; and although in truth  
His honor smote him sore, far sorer still  
Love wounded him than faith and honor both.  
Unwillingly he followed where love led,  
But ever as he looked into his heart,  
He found there only Iseult and his love.  
And so it was with Iseult. When she knew  
That love indeed had bound her, like a bird

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Caught in a net she struggled to be free,  
And so the net entangled her anew.  
The more she sought to cast the net aside,  
The more the bonds were tightened by the might  
And blinding sweetness of the man, and love.  
Shame drove her eyes away from him, and love  
Drew her heart ever to him. So the maid  
Still strove against the man she loved, and still  
Did maiden shame grow weak before her love.

Then Iseult wearied of the hopeless strife,  
And vanquished, as full many more have been,  
She yielded up her body and her soul  
To Tristan and to love.

Shyly she looked  
Upon him, and her clear eyes spoke her heart,  
Till heart and eyes had done their work. With  
love

And tenderness he looked on her, for he  
In turn had yielded to his love, and her.

## THE LOVE POTION

Lady and knight, so often as they could,  
Were still with one another, and each day  
They found each other fairer than before.  
For this is love's true way, as it is now,  
And has been, and shall be while love endures,  
That still among all lovers each shall please  
The other more as love within them grows,  
Even as fruits and flowers are more lovely  
In fulness than in birth. So fruitful love  
Grows fairer from the first; such is love's seed,  
That ever brings its harvest.

So beneath  
A cloudless sky the ship sailed on, though love  
Had turned two hearts therein from off their  
course.

And each knew what was in the other's heart,  
And yet their talk was all of other things.

## THE WITCH-CHILD

I WANDERED through the gloomy shade,  
Where each to each the tree-tops sing;  
And in a cave I found a maid,  
    A loathly, witch-born thing.

I hated her, yet spoke her fair;  
She smiled, if such a thing could smile;  
And then she cursed and left me there,—  
    Yet had she grown less vile.

I met her in a silent glen;  
Less grim a thing she was to meet;  
Again I softly spoke, and then  
    She smiled. Her smile was sweet.

## THE WITCH-CHILD

I met her in the dreaming wood;  
Her cruel eyes had grown full mild;  
Once more I spoke; and lo, she stood  
A lovely fairy child.

## LESBIA

(After the Latin of Catullus)

MY Lesbia, let us live, and let us love;  
Be sure, the warnings of the wise are worth  
No passing thought, for though the sun above  
May set, he comes again to light the earth;  
    But when our passing sunlight wanes,  
    One night of endless sleep remains.

Give me a thousand kisses, then a score,  
A hundred, then another score, and yet  
Another hundred, then a thousand more,—  
And then their number let us both forget,  
    That envy may not ever see  
    How many kisses there can be.



## HARVARD SONG

WE have journeyed to thee from the ends of the  
earth ;

Thou hast brought the clear day out of night,  
With the strength of our fathers, whose might was  
thy birth,

And whose faith is thy radiance bright.

We reap where they sowed ; their toil is our gain ;

We rejoice through their hopes and their fears ;

We are strong in the sorrow of ages of pain,

And the might of invincible years.

Now the morning leaps up from the rim of the  
world,

And we stand face to face with the day ;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

The brave banner of dawn through the sky is unfurled; —

We must go, for it calls us away.

The treasures that years have laid in our care

We may hold but to give them again;

Shall we fail, in the glory that thrills through the  
air?

We are strong; let us rise and be men.

## SLIPS OF THE PEN



## BALLADE OF LENT

Now all our cheerful days are spent,  
    Alas, the calendars declare;  
They gaily came and swiftly went,  
    Those days so bright, so debonair!  
And now a season bleak and bare  
Upon us for our sins is sent,  
    And we must live on meager fare  
For forty days, for this is Lent.

Bright gowns of colors gaily blent  
    No more, alas, our loved ones wear;  
For dainty sweets or roses' scent  
    No longer do they seem to care,  
They do not decorate their hair,

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

Or not to any great extent;

Oh, what a wearisome affair  
Has life become, now this is Lent!

They go in search of discontent

In place of joys they used to share,  
And toil up virtue's steep ascent,

Eschewing all they found most fair;  
For pleasure has become a snare,  
And all are resolutely bent

On demonstrating virtue where  
It shows the most, for this is Lent.

### *Envoy*

Dear Ladies, we are well aware

You join with us in our lament;  
So let us hopefully prepare  
For joys that follow after Lent.

## THE COST OF LIVING

ECONOMY's a dying art

For those who in the city dwell;  
The cost of life there broke my heart,  
And broke me other ways as well.

A country inn I hunted down,  
A place I thought I could afford;  
But when they heard I came from town,  
The natives raised the price of board.

To tropic climes I made a dash,  
But Yankee industry had come;  
It took away my ready cash,  
And left me hollow as a drum.

I made the frozen North my goal,  
In hopes to find things cheaper there;

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

But the discovery of the pole

Had hit the price of polar bear.

And now I have a single thought,

To seek out some uncharted isle,

Till fishes charge for being caught,

And birds have learned to make their pile.



## QUAM MINIME CREDULUS POSTERO

I'm quite in love with you today,  
    (When the sun shines, then make hay)  
I'd do most anything you say,  
    (Gather your roses while you may).

I'll buy you tickets for the play,  
    (When the sun shines, then make hay)  
I'll drive you in my one-hoss-shay,  
    (Gather your roses while you may).

And when I call I'll stay and stay,  
    (When the sun shines, then make hay)  
And swear it hurts to go away,  
    (Gather your roses while you may).

## HIGHLAND LIGHT

I'll kneel, and rant, and whine, and pray,  
    (When the sun shines, then make hay)  
And act just like a perfect jay,  
    (Gather your roses while you may).

Only remember that I may —  
    (For when the sun shines, *I* make hay)  
Not be in love another day,  
    (So gather roses while you may).

## A SPRING SONG

THE hounds of spring are on winter's track,—  
This phrase may not seem wholly new,—  
And I am prostrate on my back,  
Thinking of all I ought to do.

The earth in green is now arrayed,  
The buds are bursting on the trees;  
And I am certain I was made  
Expressly for a life of ease.

Now lovers, strolling hand in hand,  
Gaze at the friendly moon on high;  
And I should like to understand  
Why every one can loaf but I.

## A SPRING SONG

Oh, Lord, your spring is bright and gay,  
And sweet and soft and warm and fair;  
But get it over quick, I pray,  
Or else make me a millionaire.

## PROSPICE

SOME day when I have lots of time, and nothing  
else to do,

I think that I will fall in love,— and fall in love  
with you.

Just now I don't believe I could, my work dis-  
tracts me so,

And then one can't afford it when one's bank-  
account is low.

But when my work is mostly done, and pay-day  
comes around,

The words "I am engaged" will have a most  
enticing sound.

And then — well, one thing anyway is certain to  
be true,

And that is, *if* I fall in love, I'll fall in love with  
you.





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